

Special Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, May 10, 2005 - Library Board Room
02:30 PM - 04:30 PM

Minutes of Actions and Decisions of the Board of Library Trustees of the Bellingham Public Library as Authorized by RCW 27.12.210 and SEC. 7.02 Charter of the City of Bellingham.

Board Members Present: Chairperson: Tim Douglas, Vice-Chairperson: Alan Kemble, Faye Hill, Judith Wiseman, David Edelstein

Board Members Absent:

Library Staff: Pamela Kiesner; Gayle Helgoe; Gladys Fullford; Margaret Ziegler; Jane Lowrey; Scott Blume; Donna Graddock

Others: John Watts, City Council Liaison, Jon Gambrell, Barney Goltz, Tom Glenn, Elsie & Richard Zarnowitz, Phyllis & Ken Weber, Claude Hill, Velma Wendt, Christine Walsh, Janet Boyhan (WCLS), Richard Lyon, Marilyn Olsen (Whatcom Independent), Aaron McCain & J Gordon (GeoEngineers, J Thompson & Kris Hamilton (Geiger Engineers), and Cape Powers (Public Works)

Strategic Planning Work Session: Tim Douglas explained the public process to look at the building needs of the community. The top facility need was determined to be a new library building or expansion. Circulation rates rank the Bellingham system amongst the top five nationally for communities our size. With the population growth, use rates, technology changes, there are greater needs for facility and service. The current building is quite outdated physically and technologically. The Board has visited new library buildings and has seen exciting new technologies. The Board is also looking at the Fairhaven branch. The population is growing, and the Carnegie building needs to be preserved. The Hagen's drop off point in north Bellingham is experiencing heavy use. How can we best provide a library presence there?

The Site Evaluation Study is being looked at again. The P.P. Lee family actually donated land in the ravine. Money was used to create the park behind the library. The City Council was asked to commission a study of the current building and geo-technological study of the land and underground conditions.

Cape Powers, Public Works Engineer, introduced the engineers who evaluated the present building and analyzed the suitability of building on the park land. Kris Hamilton, Geiger Engineers, reviewed their structural analysis of the building and answered questions previously posed by the Board. It would not be feasible to add additional floors to the building. The building could be converted for other uses. The building does not meet current seismic standards. Lateral reinforcements are lacking in east – west direction. Mezzanine is quite problematic with shear walls in north – south direction. Certain areas of the building could be closed off for construction while other areas remain open. The current building function code does not change. Building cannot be enlarged under function code, but the use can be changed. The building is in good condition, and has a clean bill of health although there is stress in the northwest corner settlement.

J. Gordon, Geo Engineers, explained the complex geology with the ravine, Whatcom Creek and ridge. Bedrock is 55 to 65 feet, as much as 20 feet below sea level. He does not feel comfortable with old piling, and would not want to put additional weight or build on current piles. Cost estimates for foundation for a 3-story building and one-level parking was \$2,103,000. A second level of parking would be \$5.5 million. The second level would be below the water level. Gravity drainage is probably not available. Parking area would require a double load because pilings need redundancy. Judith Wiseman asked for a cost of a foundation without the parking stalls. The entire Board feels that should they decide to build on this space, they would want ample and usable open space. The two studies will be packaged together with the cost information.

The era of significant changes in seismic code has slowed; there should not be much change in the next 20 to 30 years. A wrap around the sides of building is feasible. New structures will need additional bracing. Barney Goltz, past Board member, suggested eliminating the cost of parking cars, put the dollars for parking outside the building. Velma Wendt asked about the connection between buildings. The assumption is that it is an architectural question. Aesthetically and functionally, it can be done. Claude Hill said a new building could increase the additional lateral load issue of the present building. It would not help the vertical load. John Watts mentioned the City Council approved a resolution for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards for the construction and renovation of city buildings.

The engineers will provide the cost of a three story building without parking and an executive summary of their report.

There was concern regarding the sound absorbency and ventilation of parking level. Parking might be used for other than library patrons; the city parking system would deal with this. The Library Board needs to be dedicated to the building. The parking issue needs to be addressed as a citywide issue.

Review of 2002 Site Evaluation Report: Judith Wiseman said the Site Evaluation Committee started in June, 2001. The committee consisted of Jane Lowrey, Scott Blume, Barney Goltz, Judith Wiseman, Tom Glenn, and originally, Dove Toll. They met twice a week for six months. They reviewed extensive criteria from other libraries, public comments, and library standards. They looked at potential sites in the downtown area regarding patron needs and conveniences, adequacy of future expansion, city plans, access and transportation, city's vision, library needs, availability of land and value of land. At that time it was thought the lawn area was not available. Some sites may no longer be available. Judith and Faye Hill suggested that the Board needs to discuss how to proceed. Public written or open comments would be accepted at the May 17th meeting.

Judith read the evaluation for this site, putting P. P. Lee Park through the scrutiny of the other sites. This site should be graded with the same criteria. The public should be informed of the sites the board is reviewing. John suggested looking at the new information, combine the costs, and do the outreach now. An evening session of City Council could be used for a presentation and filmed for Channel 10. An audio visual tour of existing facility could be done in advance. Include a facility needs report for Council and public involving Power Point with handouts.

The previous sites and new sites need to be reviewed, graded and ranked. True cost of fair market price is hard to determine accurately. Judith and Faye will carry over to next Special Board Meeting, June 14, 2005. Phone calls to private owners would be in order.

Richard Lyon suggested the Walton Beverage site. Tim suggested contacting the WTA Advisory Group. Public transportation and access should be evaluated.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – May 17, 2005 will begin at 2:30 p.m.

Next Special Library Board Meeting – June 14, 2005 will begin at 2:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees